

To: Distribution

From: Bob Hunnicutt, Tower Coordinator, Columbia Telecommunications

A meeting of the Telecommunications Transmission Facility Coordinating Group (TTF CG) was held on October 13, 2004. The following people were in attendance:

MEMBERS

Jane Lawton OCCS (240) 777-3724
Pat Hanehan MCPS (301) 279-3609
Helen Xu DTS (240) 777-2804
Jennifer Bryant OMB (240) 777-2761
Carlton Gilbert M-NCPPC (301) 495-4576

STAFF

Margie Williams OCCS (240) 777-3762
Robert Hunnicutt CTC (410) 964-5700
David Randolph CTC (410) 964-5700
Matt Wolfe CTC (410) 964-5700

OTHER ATTENDEES

Mike Budde Network Building & Consulting/T-Mobile
Jill Goyette Velocitel for Cingular Wireless

Discussion Item – Meeting Minutes: There were no minutes to approve as there was no September meeting.

Discussion Item – Electronic Meetings: Jane Lawton stated she had been advised that the Cable Advisory Committee could not conduct electronic meetings due to the Maryland Open Meetings Act. She said she would check to see if that also applied to the electronic voting for the TTF CG applications when there was no meeting.

Action Item: Cingular Wireless application to install twelve 50" panel antennas at the 130' level of a 150' monopole on the Sherwood High School property located at 300 Olney-Sandy Spring Road in Sandy Spring (Application #200410-01).

Dave Randolph summarized the application, and noted there were questions of whether the structural capacity of the existing monopole could accommodate additional antennas. He said that according to Cingular, modifications to the monopole would have to be made before they could attach their antennas. Ms. Lawton asked what were the structural problems. Jill Goyette replied that Sprint, the monopole owner, had agreed to make structural modifications to enable the monopole to accommodate proposed antennas from both Cingular and T-Mobile for this site. She added that these attachments would bring the monopole to its full capacity.

Ms. Lawton asked Pat Hanehan if this was the site discussed in a recent news article regarding student objection to cellular antennas on school property. Mr. Hanehan replied that the newspaper article had been about the monopole at Walter Johnson High School. He said that some time ago, Nextel had proposed to construct a new monopole on the Walter Johnson athletic field, but a teacher and some students had objected to a facility on school property because of concerns over RF emissions. Ms. Lawton asked if Walter Johnson was also the site where an RF study was recently performed and discussed at a recent PTA meeting. Mr. Hanehan replied that the RF study was for the proposed site at Magruder High School. He said he did not know of any opposition to the monopole at Magruder High School, but that a question had been raised regarding the RF study, which had concluded that there was a de minimus impact from RF exposure at the site. He said interested parties at the school were simply discussing the RF study.

Motion: Carlton Gilbert moved the application be recommended. Helen Xu seconded the motion, and it was approved with Pat Hanehan with abstaining.

Action Item: Nextel application to install six 72" panel antennas at the 69' level of a proposed 15' extension to an existing chimney on the Chevy Chase Methodist Church located at 7001 Connecticut Avenue in Chevy Chase (Application #200410-02).

Dave Randolph summarized the application. He noted that Nextel had initially proposed to go on the 4-H building across the street from the Church, but due to questions raised by the TTFCG, had opted not to pursue that site. He said Nextel had previously submitted an application to place antennas on that church chimney some time ago. That application had been recommended by the TTFCG but had been conditioned on notifying nearby residents and submitting a structural analysis. Now, a new engineering study has determined that the antennas need to be higher than the church roof in order to have an unobstructed transmission path. With this new application, Nextel proposes to build a tall extension on the chimney and attach its antennas at the top.

Mr. Randolph noted that Nextel needed this site to address capacity issues primarily when the 4-H facility had events, and also to provide additional coverage along the roadways.

Jane Lawton asked how high the chimney was going to be when extended. Mike Budde said the existing chimney is presently 55' tall and the extension would add 15' to the height.

Ms. Lawton stated she does not support this application and asked if the carrier had met with the Chevy Chase Village Section 3 representatives. Mr. Budde said that would be done during the permitting process with the Village, which Nextel cannot begin until they obtain a permit from Montgomery County. He stated Nextel met with the Village for the original application to attach to the chimney at its existing height, but had not met with them again regarding the proposed extension to the chimney. Ms. Lawton said she knew that the community had already expressed opposition to activities near this church involving a daycare center because of its close proximity to the adjacent residences. She said she doubted that nearby residents were aware of Nextel's proposal, and suggested there would be a great deal of community objection to the chimney extension because of its significant height above the existing structure. She said she believed this facility could be a stealth site, and that it is the TTFCG's responsibility to challenge carriers to use stealth sitings wherever possible.

Ms. Lawton asked why Nextel did not go on the 4-H building. Mr. Budde replied that Nextel had been unable to agree to lease terms with 4-H representatives at that time. Ms. Lawton asked the Tower Coordinator if Sprint's antennas on the 4-H facility pre-dated the TTFCG. Bob Hunnicutt replied that Sprint had obtained a modification to a Special Exception at the 4-H building in February 1996, so it did pre-date the TTFCG.

Ms. Lawton stated that the TTFCG had previously reviewed and recommended attachments to churches where the antennas were placed inside the church building or existing steeple and were not visible. She said she believed those kinds of attachments were acceptable. She said that in this case, however, since the church itself is not the minimum height for antenna attachment in a residential zone, she does not believe this application meets the requirements for a by-right attachment. She said she was also concerned because Nextel had not solicited any input from the community regarding this attachment. She said she would recommend that the application be denied or tabled until Nextel could provide additional information for this site.

Mr. Budde asked Ms. Lawton what kind of stealth design she would suggest. Ms. Lawton replied that it was up to the carrier to determine the design, and she was sure that Nextel could design something that would be less objectionable to the community.

Carlton Gilbert asked for more details about why Nextel could not place antennas on the 4-H building. Mr. Budde said that he recalled there had been concern about the structural capacity of the roof to accommodate the weight of the antennas and related equipment.

In response to Ms. Lawton's question regarding whether Nextel antennas were located on other nearby tall apartment buildings, Mr. Budde stated that in his review of the RF propagation maps Nextel had submitted, there were no other Nextel antennas identified between the beltway and Chevy Chase Circle.

Ms. Lawton asked if Nextel had considered the other nearby tall buildings in this area, such as the residential and commercial buildings just a little farther down Connecticut Avenue from the church location.

Mr. Budde said Nextel would look at using the existing buildings on Connecticut Avenue and the possibility of concealing the antennas within the chimney extension. He added that Nextel would have to obtain a structural analysis of the chimney to determine if the antennas could be placed inside it. He said Nextel could also solicit comments from the Village, and provide the structural analysis and comments to the TTFCG at the November meeting.

Pat Hanehan suggested that Nextel place the antennas on the roof of the church in a stealth design. Mr. Budde stated that due to the structure of the roof and the six heavy cables required for the antennas, he did not believe a roof design would work. Ms. Lawton said she was in favor of tabling the application until Nextel could provide the additional information Mr. Budde offered, as well as consideration of alternative nearby sites. Motion: Pat Hanehan moved the application be tabled until the applicant provided answers to the questions raised by the TTFCG. Carlton Gilbert seconded the motion, and it was unanimously adopted.

Discussion Item – News Articles: Jane Lawton distributed recent news articles regarding controversy over siting antennas on school property; RF interference from WMET; and complaints about the HAM radio towers in Poolesville.

Ms. Lawton said she also thought there may be a proposal for an amendment to the zoning text to accommodate Distributed Antenna Systems, but that the government had not yet decided how to deal with that technology. She said the Council would probably also revisit issues regarding radio and television towers in the County.

Discussion Item – Meeting Dates: Bob Hunnicutt stated that Columbia Telecommunications now supports Prince George's County as well as Montgomery County with tower siting issues. He noted that he now has a schedule conflict for the November and December meetings because both counties currently have meetings scheduled for the same day and time during those months. He asked if the group would consider an alternate time or day for those meetings. Ms. Lawton said the group would consider his request. She asked Mr. Hunnicutt to check the calendar and e-mail alternate times to the members for consensus. She said she hoped that in the future, the meetings could be scheduled so as not to create a conflict.

Mr. Hunnicutt noted that the Prince George's group always meets on the third Wednesday of every month, but that the TTFCG meeting dates are approximately every four weeks, but fluctuate to accommodate group member schedules, County activities, and holidays. He said the same meeting dates for Prince George's and Montgomery County had also created conflicts for carrier representatives who had applications pending before both groups on the same day. He agreed to prepare a 2005 TTFCG schedule that would not conflict with the Prince George's tower group. Mr. Hunnicutt said that he would survey the members, check meeting room availability, and let them know if the next meeting could be changed. Otherwise, the next meeting of the TTFCG is scheduled for Wednesday, November 17, 2004 at 2:00 p.m. in the second floor conference room of the COB.